# Sitka School District

## Certificated Evaluation Continuous Growth System

### Updated April 2015

*The Sitka School District recognizes the path to excellent teaching involves practice, mentorship, self-reflection, and continued growth in the art and science of teaching. District employee performance evaluation shall be directed toward improving the quality of instruction and fostering professional growth.*

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# Introduction/Preface

Alaska school districts are improving their current evaluation systems to better identify effective educators and to support educator development by improving instructional practices in response to federal and state regulations. This guidance manual will help ensure that educators, and therefore students, benefit from the creation of an aligned and culturally infused evaluation system. In an effective evaluation system, evidence of educator practice is used to make decisions about teacher professional growth in addition to providing information on the quality of teaching in a given classroom, school, or district. Through careful planning, districts can use educator evaluation to support dual goals—evaluation for accountability and evaluation for professional development.

Educator evaluation engages staff in a systematic, inquiry-based professional growth process designed to support their individual growth and development over time. This process supports a culture of professional learners committed to meeting the educational needs of all students. Evaluations document the expertise educators bring to Alaska's classrooms and schools and their continuous ongoing professional learning.

# Educator Evaluation Vision Statement

The Sitka School District recognizes the path to excellent teaching involves practice, mentorship, self-reflection, and continued growth in the art and science of teaching. District employee performance evaluation shall be directed toward improving the quality of instruction and fostering professional growth.

# Stakeholder Involvement

In the 2013-14 school year, an Educator Evaluation committee was established per the negotiated agreement with the Sitka Education Association (SEA). Committee members included 1 district administrator, 2 building administrators, and 3 certificated educators. The committee presented updates to certificated staff through SEA communication, as well as district-initiated communication. A group of 3 committee members (1 teacher and 2 building administrators) participated in on-site visits in two districts, one using the Marzano Framework and the other the Danielson Framework. In January 2014 the committee offered a *Question & Answer* session for all certificated staff. At the end of the *Question & Answer* session, a collective decision was made to adopt the Marzano Framework. Additionally, the superintendent updated the Sitka School Board throughout the process during public School Board meetings, and the committee presented the iObservation software to the Sitka School Board in April 2014. The committee produced an informational brochure that was distributed to staff at the end of the school year 2013-2014. The brochure described the process and identified avenues for certificated staff to provide feedback on the process.

During the 2014-15 the committee increased by 1 teacher and 1 school board member. Updates and discussions have happened outside of committee work during Admin Team meetings and then to staff in each of the buildings. The committee is preparing to provide an update to the Sitka School Board at it's May 2015 meeting.

At each school's first Parent Advisory Committee meeting in the 2015-26 school year, committee members will present the Version 1.0 of the Educator Evaluation Plan to families, and provide an opportunity for discussion and ways to provide input to Version 2.0, which will happen during the 2015-16 school year. To gather feedback from students for Version 2.0 of the Educator Evaluation Plan, focus groups of students at each school will meet with committee members to provide feedback to inform the revisions. Additionally, the process, documents, and feedback are available on the district website: sitkaschools.org/Page/2280.

## Sitka School District Certificated Evaluation Continuous Growth System

The Sitka School District (SSD) Certificated Evaluation Continuous Growth System is based on the work of Dr. Robert Marzano.  The focus of this system is to improve the quality of instruction in order to support growth in student achievement.  This purpose is best achieved through an evaluation system that includes components that support the gathering of data, sharing of information, and frequent opportunities for feedback and professional development.

The evaluation system is based on frameworks or Learning Maps for four categories of professionals. For teachers and special service providers, the framework contains four domains. For principals, the framework contains five domains. For district administrators, the framework contains six domains. Each domain is divide into elements and each element is informed by rubric descriptors and suggested evidences.

This system should be recognized as a guide to reasonable professional conversations about improving and supervising instruction.  The intention is to ensure that professional conversations around work performance take place. Individuals are expected to improve their performance as they move forward in their career and they are given opportunity and support in order to improve. SSD believes that teachers, special service providers and administrators should be evaluated on their total performance and that it is reasonable and necessary to include information beyond momentary observations.  The District also strongly supports opportunities for certificated staff to work collegially and as a team in the continuous improvement of our instructional practice.

The purpose and scope of educator and administrator evaluations are to help teachers, administrators, and special service providers to grow professionally, to improve the effectiveness of instruction, and to relate to the future employment of a teacher, or special service provider. A major shift in our evaluation plan recognizes that beginning in the 2015-

2016 school year, districts are required to identify whether a teacher is exemplary, proficient, basic, or unsatisfactory on the state standards, student learning and achievement, and incorporate the cultural standards set out in 4 ACC 04.200(f).

The district is also required to make a copy of the plan and forms, templates, or checklists that the district uses in the evaluation of a certificated employee and make them available to the public by posting the form(s) on the district's website. This includes making it clear how the district has considered information (using a form or electronic means) from students, parents, community members, classroom teachers, affected collective bargaining units, and administrators in the design of the employee evaluation system under AS 14.20.149.

## What's New in the SSD Evaluation Handbook?

This newest version of the SSD Evaluation Handbook is the first comprehensive review of processes and procedures since the handbook was revised in 2004. There are significant changes to the processes and procedures in this handbook based on requirements of the Alaska Educator Evaluation System adopted by the Alaska State Board of Education in June 2013.

Among the major changes included in this plan:
- The district plan is aligned with requirements of the Alaska Educator Evaluation System adopted by the Alaska State Board of Education in June 2013
- References to previous statutes and regulations have been replaced with new links to the current requirements
- The district has chosen to align the evaluation model with the Marzano Instructional Framework
- The new evaluation plan requires the development of Student Learning Objectives by teachers, and the performance of students on these objectives will be a component of the teacher and administrator evaluations

Teachers and administrators will be rated as one of four state designated categories: Exemplary, Proficient, Basic, or Unsatisfactory.

## Additional Evaluation System Requirements/Procedures

The SSD Evaluation Handbook is aligned with the Alaska Educator Evaluation System, and includes the following required elements. Specifically, Section 14.20.149 states that the employee evaluation system must:
1. Require at least two (2) formal observations for the evaluation of each non-tenured teacher in the district each school year,
2. Require at least an annual evaluation of each tenured teacher in the district who met the district performance standards during the previous school year,
3. Permit the district to limit its evaluations of tenured teachers who have consistently exceeded the district performance standards to one evaluation every two school years,
4. Require the district to perform an annual evaluation for each administrator,

5. Require the district to prepare and implement a Plan of Improvement for a teacher or administrator whose performance did not meet the district performance standards, except if the teacher's or administrator's performance warrants immediate dismissal under AS 14.20.170 (a); and
6. Provide an opportunity for students, parents, community members, teachers, and administrators to provide information on the performance of the teacher or administrator who is the subject of the evaluation to the evaluating administrator.

**Further provisions include**:

A person may not conduct an evaluation unless the person holds a Type B certificate or is a site administrator under the supervision of a person with a Type B certificate, is employed by the district as an administrator, and has completed training in the use of the district's teacher evaluation system.

Once each school year, the district shall offer in-service training to the certificated employees who are subject to the evaluation system. The training must address the procedures of the system, the standards the district uses in evaluation, and other information the district considers helpful to the evaluation process.

The district will provide a tenured teacher whose performance, after evaluation, receives an *Unsatisfactory* rating, with a Plan of Improvement.

The evaluation administrator shall consult with the tenured teacher in setting clear, specific performance expectations to be included in the Plan of Improvement. The Plan of Improvement must address ways in which the tenured teacher's performance can be improved and shall last for not less than ninety (90) workdays and not more than one-hundred eighty (180) workdays unless the minimum time is shortened by agreement between the evaluating administrator and the teacher.

The Plan of Improvement shall be based on the professional performance standards outlined in the district's evaluation procedures. The teacher must be observed at least twice during the course of the plan. If, at the conclusion of the Plan of Improvement, the tenured teacher's performance again does not meet the district performance standards, the district may not retain the teacher under AS 14.20.175 (b) (1).

The district may place an administrator who has previously acquired tenure, whose performance, including performance as an evaluator under the district's certificated employee evaluation system, does not meet the district performance on standards, on a Plan of Improvement. The plan must address ways in which the administrator's performance can be improved and shall last for not less than ninety (90) workdays and not more than two-hundred ten (210) workdays unless the minimum time is shortened by agreement between the evaluation administrator and the administrator being evaluated.

The district must observe the administrator being evaluated at least twice during the course of the plan. If, at the conclusion of the Plan of Improvement, the administrator's performance again does not meet the district's performance standards, the district may terminate its employment contract with the administrator.

This subsection does not restrict the right of the district to reassign an administrator to a teaching position consistent with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. Information provided to the district under its certificated employee evaluation system concerning the performance of an individual being evaluated under the system is not public record and is not subject to disclosure under AS 09.25. However, the individual who is the subject of the evaluation is entitled to a copy of the information and may waive the confidentiality provisions of the subsection concerning the information.

The district will provide an educator whose performance, after evaluation, receives a *Basic* rating in two or more standards, with district support or a Plan of Professional Growth

## 2015 Draft Version

This document is a work in progress. The Evaluation Committee requests any errors, omissions, and recommendations shared either through the website or to one of the committee members listed in Acknowledgements. The current version is considered Version 1.0, and during the course of the 2015-16 school year, Version 2.0 will emerge.

Possible future additions to the Evaluation Process include but are not limited to:
- Targeted Walk-Throughs
- Peer Evaluations
- Portfolios
- Modifiable surveys to align with individual teacher goals
- Weights on surveys that include the percentage of surveys received

## Standards: Content and Performance

The district has selected to adopt the Marzano framework, which aligns to Alaska teacher standards. The Marzano framework has a Learning Map that addresses the standards, or elements, related to non-classroom instruction and special service providers. The iObservation software embeds a rubric for each of the elements that align to the level of performance.

## Cultural Standards

The district has selected to adopt the Marzano Framework, which aligns with the Alaska Cultural Standards, including the iObservation tool that used for the observation process.